

Drish Home<sup>use</sup>  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama  
Tuscaloosa Co.

HABS No. 16-201  
HABS  
ALA  
63-TUSLO  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 16

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer  
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

Project #16-201  
THE DRISH HOME  
23rd Avenue and 18th Street  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

1

HISTORICAL DATA:

Built: Begun about 1830-1832, several years in process of construction.

Ownership:

Built by Dr. John Drish, on his own plan and with his own slave labor.

Second owner, Colonel E. A. Powell.

Third owner, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Light Co.

Fourth owner, W. G. Cochrane.

Fifth owner, City Board of Education.

Present owner, Charles Turner.

Present Occupant:

Charles Turner now uses this building as a warehouse for junk automobile parts, etc. Has not been used as a residence for many years.

Plantation House:

This location, at the date of erection, was out of the city and a part of a large plantation. It had extensive grounds, surrounded by a fence and wall. There was a keepers lodge at the north entrance, standing in front of a double row of elms leading up to the mansion.

Today:

Now it has become a part of the City and is surrounded by private homes.

For many years it was used by the City as a part of the Public School System.

Today it is a junk shop.

Source of Material:

James A. Anderson, ~~architect~~, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

W. S. Wyman, Jr., Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Dr. A. B. Moore, University of Alabama. Dean of G.S.

*Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.*

DRISH HOME  
23d Avenue and 18th Street  
Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

A two-storey high Ionic porch on the main façade of the Drish house is divided in the middle by a three-storey tower. At the rear of the building is a Doric portico, also two storeys in height, but without the tower. A separate kitchen building lies off to one side of the house so as not to interfere with views from the two porches. A wide hall extends through the center of the house and has rounded corners at the rear. The original stair has been removed.

The tower is stuccoed brick, like the remainder of the house. The first stage or storey, on the front, has three arches with egg and dart composition borders. The stucco is heavily grooved to give the appearance of rustication. The second storey has two arches on the front set between pilasters with sunken egg and dart panels. The frieze is decorated with composition rosettes. The third stage of the tower also has two arches on the front, with three-quarter columns at the corners and a cornice of wooden brackets similar to the main cornice of the mansion. The bed-mould of the cornices is the egg and dart.

(Revised and rewritten at HABS  
Headquarters, Feb. 19, 1936 -  
H.C.F.)

(Original sheet in field notebook).

Addendum to  
Dr. John R. Drish House  
2300 17th St.  
Tuscaloosa  
Tuscaloosa County  
Alabama

HABS No. AL-201

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63-TUSLO  
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PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Alabama	COUNTY Tuscaloosa	TOWN OR VICINITY Tuscaloosa
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Drish, Dr. John R., House		HABS NO. AL-201
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 2300 17th St. (in traffic circle at intersection of 17th St. and 23rd Ave.)		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) mid 19th c.	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Once a remarkable example of eclectic combination of Greek Revival and Italianate elements. John R. Drish, builder-owner, was Tuscaloosa physician and erstwhile building contractor, owner of skilled slave craftsmen who executed much of early Tuscaloosa		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Served at Jemison School 1906-25; Southside Baptist Church in 1978. /plasterwork.		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick covered with stucco		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) 61'-2" (five-bay front) x 67'-10 1/2" overall, two stories		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Hipped roof extending over full-length porticoes front and rear, bracketed cornice with egg and dart ovolo molding, applied paterae on frieze, north (front) elevation dominated by three-story arcuated tower breaking from center of full-height Ionic portico (tower embellished with Greek Revival-style detail and bracketed (cont'd in Other Info below)		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Center hall plan, originally branched stairway to second floor, elaborate plasterwork throughout.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Severely altered early to mid 20th c. including gutting of interior (removal of original stairway, plasterwork, and most interior woodwork), exterior modifications, demolition of service wing.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Now sandwiched between modern construction on east and west sides.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE (cont'd from Exterior Features above)...cornice), hexastyle Tuscan colonnade across rear; semidetached rectangular one-story service wing (approx. 41'-11" x 20'-3") on east side. Mansion originally stood at end of tree-lined avenue extending to now-demolished gate and porter's lodge at present 23rd Ave.-15th St. inter-		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) section.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Alison K. Hoagland, HABS, from information provided by Robert Gamble		DATE Nov. 1984

ADDENDUM TO  
DR. JOHN H. DRISH HOUSE  
Birmingham Industrial District  
2300 Seventeenth St.  
Tuscaloosa  
Tuscaloosa County  
Alabama

HABS No. AL-201

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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ADDENDUM TO  
DR. JOHN R. DRISH HOUSE  
HABS No. AL-201  
(Page 4)

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DR. JOHN R. DRISH HOUSE

This report is an addendum to a three page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 2300 17th Street, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

Date of Construction: Early 1830s; 1855 tower addition

Description: The Drish House is a two-story, stucco-covered brick Greek Revival house with fanciful Italianate additions, including tower and cast-iron grillwork designed by English architect William Nichols. The residence later served as a school and is now used as a church annex. A double row of elms originally bordered the driveway to the house and on the east and west sides were flower gardens. In the rear were brick slave houses, and extending to the railroad was Drish's farm. Across Greensboro Road was Drish's cotton gin and press.

Project Information: This report is based on written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Historical Overview: The Drish House was built by Dr. John R. Drish (d. 1864). Builder-owner Drish successfully dabbled in building construction as well as medicine. His skilled slave craftsmen, reported to be first-rate mechanics, masons, carpenters, plasterers and blacksmiths, executed decorative plaster-work for this and other Tuscaloosa properties. Dr. Drish invested in slaves and in land. He also invested (\$30,000) in the N.E. & S.W. Railroad and worked to build a cotton mill in Tuscaloosa.

**Sources Consulted**

Alabama Register, 7/31/75

Gamble, Robert, The Alabama Catalog, p. 353

Smith, William R., Reminiscences of a Long Life, 1889

Site Visit, 9/16/91